BANK BILL TEST

BY

JACOB PERKINS

1809

1984.27.1

PERKINS'

BANK BILL TEST;

CONSISTING OF

ORIGINAL IMPRESSIONS FROM THE

PERMANENT STEREOTYPE STEEL PLATES

OF MASSACHUSETTS PAPER CURRENCY,

EXECUTED IN CONFORMITY TO AN ACT OF THE LEGISLATURE,
PASSED MARCH 3, 1809:

TOGETHER WITH THE

STANDARD CHECK PLATE,

WHICH WILL APPLY EQUALLY TO EVERY BANK IN THE UNITED STATES
WHICH HAS ADOPTED OR WHICH MAY ADOPT
THIS PRINCIPLE.

NEWBURYPORT, (MASS.)
PUBLISHED BY THE PROPRIETOR,
AND FOR SALE AT THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSTORES IN THE UNITED STATES.

W. & J. GILMAN, PRINTERS.
1809.

EXTRACT FROM THE ACT REQUIRING THE SEVERAL BANKS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS TO ADOPT THE *STEREOTYPE STEEL PLATES.*

"WHEREAS JACOB PERKINS, of Newburyport, in the county of Essex, hath invented and completed certain Stereotype Steel Plates for the printing of Bank Bills, and hath obtained from the President of the United States a patent for the exclusive use of the same; and whereas the said Jacob Perkins hath given a bond, with sureties, in the penal sum of ten thousand dollars to this Commonwealth, conditioned, among other things, to print and impress with the said plates, Bank Bills of the denomination of One, Two, Three, Four, and Five Dollars, for the use of the several incorporated Banks in this Commonwealth, and to furnish bank paper for the same, of the best quality, upon the terms which are specified and contained in the said bond; and whereas the public good requires that the Bills of the several denominations aforesaid, shall be printed and impressed from the said plates, in order to produce a uniformity in, and to prevent the counterfeiting the same—

"*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same,* That from and after the first day of July next, no bills of the denomination of One, Two, Three, Four, and Five Dollars, shall be issued or emitted by the President, Directors, and company of any Bank incorporated under the authority of the Legislature of this Commonwealth, unless the said bills shall be printed and impressed from Stereotype Steel Plates, from which plates original impressions of the bills of the several denominations aforesaid, are deposited in the office of the Secretary of this Commonwealth; nor unless the said bills of the denomination of Five Dollars, shall have on the back of the same an impression from the check plates, one of the impressions from which is also deposited in the office of said Secretary of said Commonwealth."

TO THE PUBLICK.

THE subscriber, having devoted many years to the improvement of the method of making Bank Bills, has, at length the satisfaction of realizing the accomplishment of an object which he deems of the highest importance to the publick, and which he has pursued with unremitting study, labor, and expense.

His last improvement, which has been sanctioned and adopted by the Legislature of Massachusetts, will now afford a fair and thorough trial to the principle; a principle which he fully believes will be found effectual to the protection of a paper currency, and which, from its uncommon simplicity, may be easily and universally understood.

For this purpose he has provided and offers to the publick a set of original impressions from the plates on which all the Bills of this Commonwealth will be executed, and also impressions from his Check Plate, which will be uniform on the back of every bill of five dollars and upwards, having the same check letter, that shall be executed on this principle, whether of this State or of any other of the United States.

This book of original impressions will be found a valuable companion not only in the counting-house of the Merchant, but in every family, and to every individual concerned in handling money. A general familiarity with these, which may be acquired by a moderate degree of attention, will enable the careful eye to discriminate at a glance between this and every other kind of Bills, and thus instantly to detect every species of counterfeits.

The principal use of these impressions, however, will be as a *Rule*, *Gauge* or *Test*, by which other bills may be compared or measured. By the aid of these, and especially of the Check Plate, taking care to apply the proper check letter, the character of a suspected bill may be immediately decided, with scarcely a possibility of mistake. The Check Plate, it may be observed, is composed of steel bars, which, when the work was impressed on their surface, were in contact with each other; but afterward were case hardened and separated by narrow plain strips of hardened steel, thus dividing the letters and the other work as chance directed, and forming convenient lines to check with bills which may be suspected.

It must be obvious, to all who have attended to the subject, that a perfect uniformity in Bank Bills is extremely important. If the paper currency through the United States were uniform, whatever were its character, it would be safe from counterfeits, because all would be familiarly acquainted with it. The danger to the publick arises, not so much from the want of obvious distinction between the genuine Bill and that which is spurious; as from the endless variety of Bills in circulation, which renders it difficult for any, except professed money-dealers, to obtain even a moderate acquaintance with them. This is evident from the well known fact, that Brokers, Tellers, and officers of the Banks, who are continually engaged in receiving and paying money, easily distinguish the good bill from the bad on whatever plan it may be made. They are seldom deceived. The loss from counterfeits falls principally, and almost exclusively, on the inexperienced, on those who handle comparatively but a little money, and who are least of all able to sustain the loss. Hence when the paper currency of the state shall be brought to one standard, the community at large will soon become as well acquainted with the uniform bill as the most experienced man is at present with the various kinds now in circulation, and will be equally secure from the danger of loss.

This uniformity will, without doubt, soon be completely effected; for although the provisions of the Act before referred to, do not extend to bills of a higher denomination than Five Dollars, the subscriber has the pleasure to inform the publick, that the Banks are already directing their larger Bills to be made from the same plate.

It is also proper to observe that several of the Banks out of this State have already ordered their Bills to be impressed with the subscriber's Standard Check Plate.

But perhaps it will be asked, if an idea so simple as that of bringing Bank bills to an uniform standard would produce benefits so important, why has it not long since been adopted? To this it may be answered, that until the invention of the Steel Plate, this uniformity was impracticable. Copper plates soon wear out, and no imitation of them can be executed which shall produce an impression, perfectly uniform with the original. Of this artists have been fully aware.

In this respect the Steel plate has pre-eminently the superiority. It is capable of producing a number of uniform impressions equal to the demand of the whole Commonwealth for many years, without suffering any change or decay.

In confirmation of this idea a single fact is stated. The same number of impressions which has already been produced from the first Steel plate the subscriber has used, would have worn out as many Copper plates as would cost upwards of eight thousand dollars; yet this plate continues to produce perfect impressions. From the superior durability of the plate it is obvious that no measure of labor or of expense in its execution can be thought unreasonable or extravagant.

On the whole, it will appear clearly to every mind that will duly examine the subject, that the most simple Bill, engraved on steel, can never be perfectly imitated, so as to check or compare in every part. If, however, such an imitation of a very plain Bill might be produced, as would tempt the counterfeiter, by the prospect of a sufficient circulation to indemnify for his expense; there can be no doubt that the labor, workmanship and expense of the Steel Plate Bill may be so encreased, as totally to discourage all attempts at counterfeiting; especially if it be considered that the superior workmanship of the Bill, would in the same proportion increase the expense, and facilitate the detection of the spurious Bill.

JACOB PERKINS.

DIRECTIONS FOR *GAUGING* AND *COMPARING* SUSPECTED BILLS.

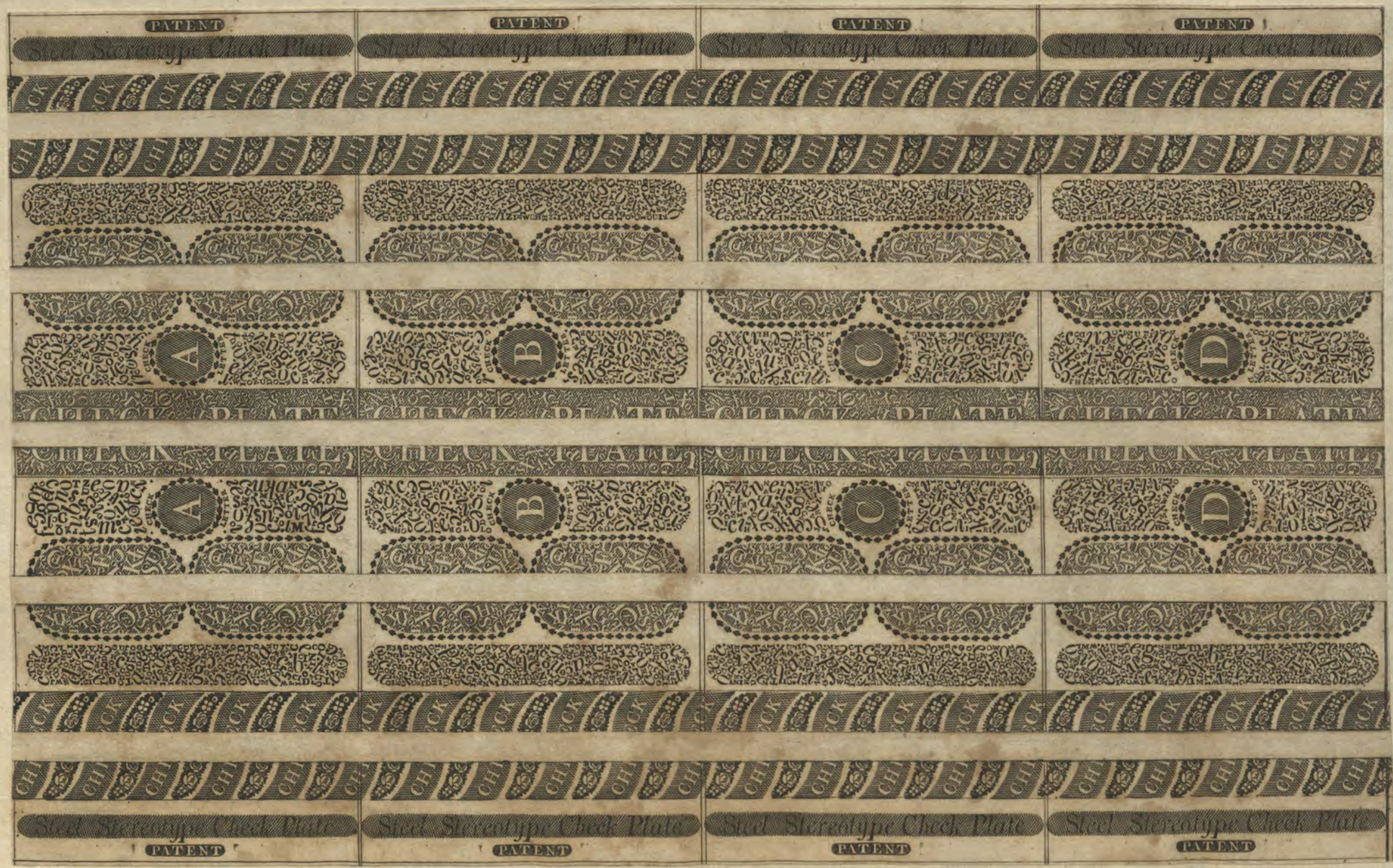
ALL Bills of Five Dollars and upward, made upon the foregoing plan, will be impressed on the back with the check plate. Every genuine bill will gauge with one or other of the four backs on the plate (No. 1.) according to the check letter, A. B. C. or D.

In gauging, particular care should be taken to fold the suspected Bill exactly at one of the lines of separation, and to match it with the opposite line on the check plate.

If the Bill be rumpled by much handling, or contracted, in consequence of having been wet, and then suddenly and carelessly dried, it should be gently stretched, until the extreme or outside parts of the work exactly coincide; then, if all the intermediate letters and other work perfectly match or gauge, the bill must be genuine.

Another mode of discriminating between the genuine Bill and the counterfeit, is by a general comparison of the Bill itself. This may be done by laying the suspected Bill under the genuine Bill having the same check letter; then carefully examine whether the letters and other work are precisely the same in each Bill. If the suspected Bill be spurious there will be an obvious difference in the form, general appearance, or relative position of the letters and the other work, which will generally leave no doubt as to the character of the Bill.

This latter mode will usually be found the more easy, and it is presumed will be sufficiently accurate and effectual. It will be found particularly, the preferable mode of testing Bills under Five Dollars, such Bills having no check impression on their back.


PATENT
Steel Stereotype Check Plate
A
B
C
D

TEN DOLLARS
The President Directors & Company of the
Promise to pay
TEN DOLLARS
or bearer on demand
Cash.
Pres.
FIVE DOLLARS
The President Directors & Company of the
Promise to pay
FIVE DOLLARS
or bearer on demand
Cash.
Pres.
FIVE DOLLARS
The President Directors & Company of the
Promise to pay
FIVE DOLLARS
or bearer on demand
Cash.
Pres.
FIVE DOLLARS
The President Directors & Company of the
Promise to pay
FIVE DOLLARS
or bearer on demand
Cash.
Pres.

MASSACHUSETTS
The President, Directors and Company of the
promise to pay
ONE DOLLAR
or bearer on demand
CASH.R
PRES.T
ONE DOLLAR

MASSACHUSETTS
The President, Directors and Company of the
promise to pay
ONE DOLLAR
or bearer on demand
CASH.R
PRES.T
ONE DOLLAR

MASSACHUSETTS
The President Directors and Company of the
promise to pay
TWO DOLLARS
or bearer on demand
CASH.R
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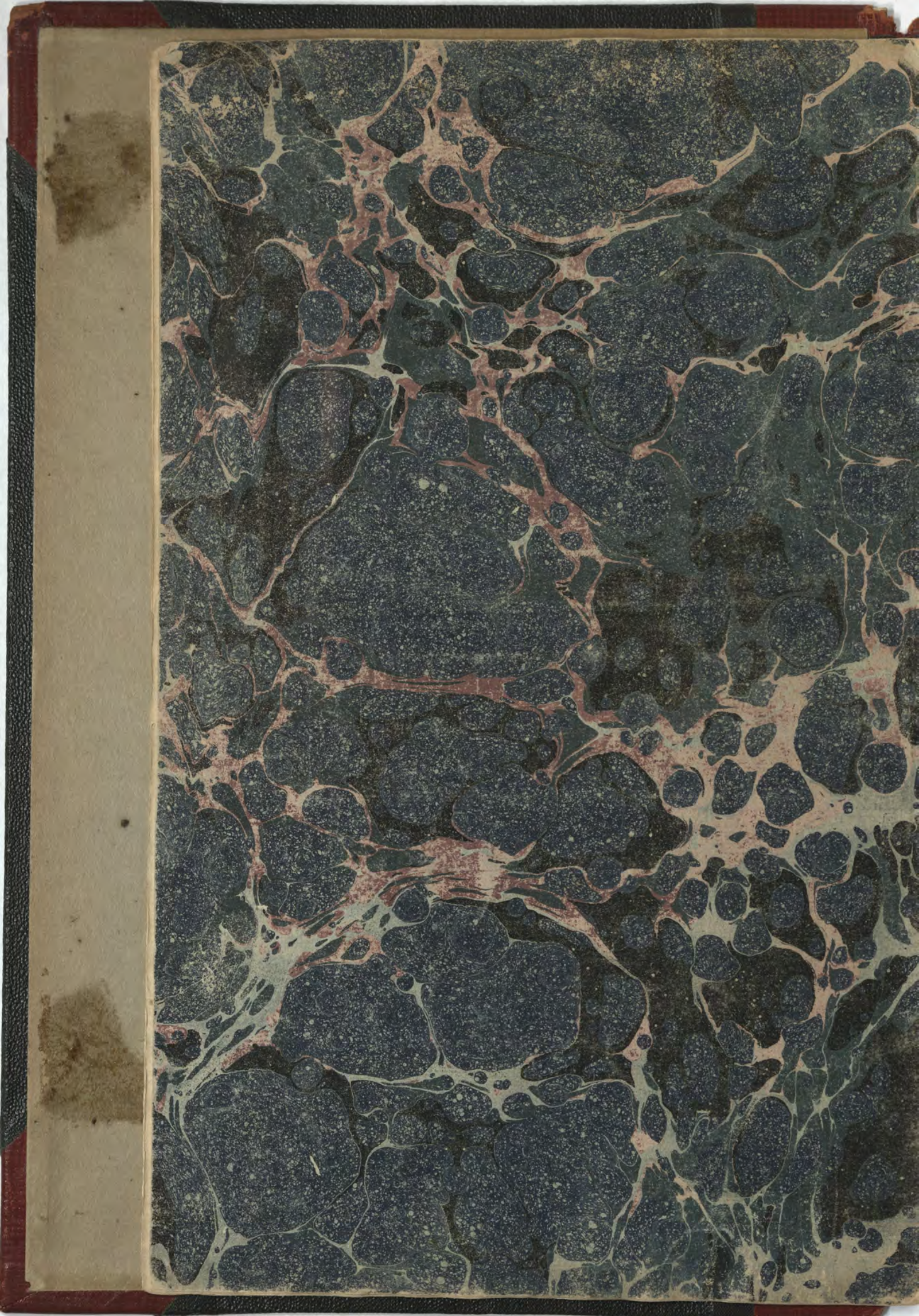
TWO DOLLARS

MASSACHUSETTS
The President, Directors and Company of the
promise to pay
THREE DOLLARS
or bearer on demand
CASH.R
PRES.T
THREE DOLLARS